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Children's rights advocacy as transnational citizenship

Abstract

This paper develops conceptual tools for analyzing the practices of children's rights organizations and professionals as transnational citizenship. To this end, we set out to trace a continuum of citizenship practices where global and local influences and forces enmesh in ways that cannot be grasped if the two are treated as separate realms. To theorize the social dynamism and spatial constitution of transnational citizenship as a local–global continuum, we turn to Bourdieuan field theoretical thinking. By analyzing the handling of the Finnish Periodic Report on children's rights by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the mobilization of its recommendations by Finnish children's rights advocates, we show that transnational citizenship in the field of children's rights is practiced not merely 'out there' but also 'right here'. We conclude by discussing what novel insights field theory has to offer to the study of advocacy practices as transnational citizenship.

Introduction

Children's rights advocacy, as a subspecies of work for human rights, is a form of transnational citizenship practiced by numerous organizations, associations, policy makers, experts and activists, along with millions of children and youth worldwide. It is characterized by a widely accepted conception of children as vulnerable human beings in need of special protection. Its target of improving children's living conditions is as omnipresent as is the presence of children and youth all over the world. Moreover, children's rights advocacy currently rests with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international treaty ratified by almost all nation-states. Hence, it is fair to say that it constitutes an arena *par excellence* for practices of transnational citizenship, one that enjoys an exceptionally legitimate position in attempts to develop regulatory regimes that transcend national societies.

Yet it is equally clear that what actually transpires under children's rights advocacy in different parts of the world constitutes a diversified and uneven field of thought and action that cannot be adequately captured by top-down models of global governance. Different

cultural, religious and societal traditions influence conceptions of children and childhood in ways that resonate deeply with thinking about and practicing children's rights.

Consequently, the manifold practices seeking to fulfil children's rights are at once uniquely transnational and stubbornly contextual.

How can we account for this 'unity in diversity', and how to map the complex geographies of children's rights practices that bring together global desires and local actualities? To account for these questions this paper sets out to develop conceptual tools for analyzing how the transnational reaches into the everyday practices of children's rights organizations and professionals, not simply as a regulatory flow emanating from the global realm of the UNCRC and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but also in and through practices that are locally embedded. To this end, we set out to trace a continuum of citizenship practices where global and local influences and forces enmesh in ways that cannot be grasped if the two are treated as separate realms.

What is important in this, we argue, is that it enables us to see practices of transnational citizenship as a condition that people can partake in without having to adopt cosmopolitan dispositions or be part of internationally mobile elites. As thought and action the transnational is, thus, not merely 'out there' but also 'right here'. We also seek to reveal that in issues that have a global resonance even the most localized contexts of action may come to reflect concerns that have emerged as a result of efforts to transcend politics in national societies, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Committee that is monitoring its implementation.

To theorize the social dynamism and spatial constitution of transnational citizenship as a local–global continuum rather than dichotomy, we turn to field theoretical thinking as developed by Pierre Bourdieu and his followers (e.g. Bourdieu 1975; 1990; Bigo 2008; Dezalay and Garth 2006). The paper begins by addressing recent attempts to grasp the spatialities of transnational citizenship in topological (or relational) and topographical (or place-based) terms. We then move on to Bourdieu's field theory to gain further conceptual tools for making sense of the socio-spatial realities of children's rights advocacy. In empirical terms the paper deals with the handling of the Finnish country report on children's rights in the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the mobilization of the CRC's recommendations by Finnish children's rights organizations and activists. We seek to show

that what seems like an interaction between two separate realms – one global and the other local – is actually part of transnational citizenship practiced within the field of children's rights. We conclude by discussing what field theory has to offer to the study of transnational citizenship and point out some questions where it is likely to lead to novel insights.

The spatialities of transnational citizenship

The question of transnational citizenship is often framed in one of the following three ways. First, the term is evoked in the context of changing political world order whereby the nation-state is seen to be transforming and weakening due to the pressures brought about by global capitalism and neoliberal governance. In this framing transnational citizenship is sometimes seen as a "scale jump" among those groups of people who have become more vulnerable when exposed to the forces of global capitalism and who maybe face the necessity to migrate in search for livelihoods outside their countries of birth (e.g. Nagel and Staeheli 2004; Stokes 2010).

Partly overlapping with the former approach is a focus on transnational citizenship as a process that is challenging and reworking the traditional mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion embedded in the global nation-state system. Here the issues dealt with often revolve around the question of citizenship as a set of rights that are restricted from or extended to groups of immigrants, legal aliens or people 'sans papier', and what role the nation-state territory still plays in the recognition of these rights (e.g. Faist 2000; Benhabib 2004; Kofman 2005; Tambakaki 2009).

Third, there is scholarship in which the idea of transnational citizenship is detached from being about legal status or political rights and viewed as a set of practices and acts that reflect people's commitments and values. Here the focus is typically on the processes and practices that attach people to the (political) communities where they have things at stake, their experiences of citizenship in these contexts, and how all this feeds into the constitution of transnational political communities and political agency (e.g. Landolt and Goldring 2010; Lazar and Nuijten 2013; Van Bochove et al. 2010).

This extensive multidisciplinary scholarship has shown that transnational citizenship is a complex and to some extent controversial issue where no agreement exists on whether such

a form of supranational political belonging and democratic commitment is viable at all. Positions in this regard differ depending on whether citizenship is seen mainly as a legal status, an area of morally reflexive social practices, or a set of informed or intentional acts (e.g. Hörschelmann and Rafaie 2014; Isin 2009).

Much less has been written on how these multiple changes could be understood in spatial terms, and whether we might better grasp practices of transnational citizenship by scrutinizing and theorizing their spatial configurations further. Symptomatic in this regard is the still widespread tendency to mirror transnational citizenship against nation-state citizenship, and build the argument about its viability on the basis of whether its conditions can conceivably be met on a world scale (Benhabib 2007; Owen 2011; Thaa 2001).

Moreover, expressions such as “peripheral countries are more susceptible to world influences” and “human rights language is at least partially driven by processes exogenous to a country” testify to a dichotomous imagination along the dimensions of inside/outside and national/global (Beck et al. 2012: 495).

This said, those interested in re-thinking the very idea of citizenship in the context of transnationalization are less prone to remain confined by the nation-state models and paradigms of citizenship. A search for alternative understandings of transnational citizenship has inspired scholars to call into question received notions of the spatialities and scales of citizenship. While some of this work remains schematic (e.g. Blank 2007; Bosniak 2007; Brand 2014), some have sought to move beyond the spatial parameters of modern forms of citizenship (e.g. Bullen and Whitehead 2005; Lorimer 2010; Ho 2011; Western 2012).

For the purposes of this paper Desforges, Jones and Woods (2005) outline a particularly interesting direction for the study of the spatialities of transnational citizenship. They explicitly take up the challenge of conceptualizing space in a “relational and topological way” and consider that this provides a “possibility to introduce innovative and perceptive ways of thinking about the spaces of citizenship” (Desforges et al. 2005: 443). In probing into the potential of topological thinking as an inroad into new approaches to transnational citizenship, they refer to Amin’s idea about ‘politics of propinquity’ coupled with ‘politics of connectivity’.

Amin's key argument is that under trans-localizing globalization "there is no definable regional territory to rule over", people's sense of place is "no longer reducible to regional moorings or to a territorially confined public sphere", and the public sphere is trans-territorial, generating "associations and discursive engagements at a variety of spatial scales and a variety of spatial form" (Amin 2004: 36–37). Therefore we should be able to discuss place-bound politics in two spatial registers, one based in juxtaposition and "close spatial proximity" (propinquity), and the other on "multiple geographies of affiliation linkage and flow" (connectivity). These fold together the "culturally plural and the geographically proximate and distant" (Amin 2004: 37–38; cf. Cox 1998).

Despite a deliberate attempt by Amin to keep these two logics of political agency analytically together, he tends to discuss them in different registers. The politics of propinquity is characterized by agonistic engagement based on "the immanent effects of geographical juxtaposition" (Amin 2004: 39), whereas the politics of connectivity is defined by a relationally constituted public sphere that crosses "a given region, such that the inside and the outside are no longer locationally defined" (Amin 2004: 41).

Hence, as noted in critical commentaries by Pierce, Martin and Murphy (2011) and Cox (2013), Amin's approach falls short of theorizing exactly how propinquity relates to connectivity in mundane practices. In later works he has shifted away from the issue to look at the geographies of attachment in terms of hybrid "entanglements of situated practice" (e.g. Amin 2012: 5). Nevertheless, in placing the question of spatiality at the center stage, he has paved way for further theorization about how the transnational and localized fold together in practices of citizenship, yet be analytically distinguishable in their enmeshment.

Building on conceptual work on relational politics, we set out to develop a theoretical understanding of the interconnections between topological and topographical spatialities in transnational citizenship. In so doing we wish to respond to the call by Staeheli, Ehrkamp and Leitner (2012: 641-642) for "a more complete geography of citizenship that includes the geographies of daily life and of attachment", focusing particularly "on the ways that a variety of agents, drawing on different forms of power, negotiate the frameworks that order lives, communities and societies". However, more than the socio-spatial messiness of people's daily lives enmeshing the institutional and non-institutional facets of citizenship, we are interested in how children's rights advocacy involves practices of citizenship that cannot be

understood simply as localized or global but rather as part of a field that is genuinely transnational.

Before we turn to Bourdieu's field theoretical thought for further conceptual tools, two clarifications of our objectives must be made. First, in this paper we are not interested in citizenship as claims to individual or collective rights by those who themselves are in a vulnerable position in society, as often is the case in approaches to mundane practices of citizenship. Instead we will look into practices through which organizations, professionals and activists engaged in children's rights advocacy seek to secure such rights for children and the youth (see also Basok 2009; Boylan and Dalrymple 2009; Royea and Appl 2009). In this context, citizenship is about identifying and exposing exclusions and inequalities related to social and cultural vulnerabilities, and where possible, introducing societal change (Isin 2009). This focus mainly follows from our empirical case and is not meant to indicate indifference towards the struggle for individual or collective rights by the claimants themselves as a facet of lived citizenship. Indeed, we are well aware of the importance of such political struggles by children and youth in various societal settings and geographical locations (e.g. Cockburn 2005; Kennelly 2011; Wood 2014), and have ourselves discussed them elsewhere (e.g. Kallio and Häkli 2011; Kallio 2012; Kallio, Häkli and Bäcklund 2015).

Second, we will not be scrutinizing the results of children's rights advocacy in terms of how it may or may not foster active/activist/object citizenship among children and the youth. There are several interesting and intriguing questions related to children's citizenship as a moral project in liberal societies or an unruly transformative power with potential for societal change (e.g. Kennelly 2009; Sharkey and Shields 2008). What we will restrict ourselves to analyzing in this paper is simply how to make sense of activities by organizations and individuals engaged in children's rights issues that are at once locally contextual and transnationally constituted. Here we wish to heed Basok's (2009, 186) call for further attention to the "role of advocacy groups in bringing forward, translating, and negotiating controversial emerging human rights values".

Children's rights advocacy as a transnational field: a Bourdieuan topology

We propose that Pierre Bourdieu's (1975; 1990) field theoretical insights offer viable tools for the study of how practices of transnational citizenship fold together the local and the global (see also Faist 2010). Whereas Bourdieu developed his field theory in the context of analyzing national social systems and structures, in his later works he also envisioned world fields (*champ mondial*) that are increasingly conditioning national practices in economic, scientific, legal, and other fields.

Bourdieu's field theory is interesting in the context of transnationalization because it does not "presume an evolutionary and linear logic of a trend towards a functionally differentiated world polity or world society" (Faist 2010: 1673). Rather transnational fields are structured by power created by those who are drawn into them as participants, such as actors or groups struggling for social positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In addressing the concept of field as an entry point to transnational social dynamism, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004: 605) define social fields as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed".

The notion of transnational fields is deeply concerned with issues of agency. In the spirit of structurationist thought, transnational fields at once condition social practices and are produced and reproduced by these practices. The social dynamism in transnationalization is thus explained largely by recourse to actors' positions in relation to other actors. The field is a relational space constituted by social relationships that exert a compelling force on actors, but one that is differentiated depending on what the actors' positions are in the respective field, and what specific stakes attach them to its struggles (Bourdieu 1993).

The potential of Bourdieu's field theory has been noted by scholars with interest in how transnational relations emerge and influence on actors (e.g. Bigo 2000; Glick Schiller 2005; Kuus 2011; Landolt and Goldring 2010). Transnational fields are here seen as relational social spaces that transcend the dichotomous 'scalar fix' between the national and the global (Brenner 1998; Go 2008; Jackson 2008; Savage 2011). Some works explicitly recognize Bourdieu's role as an early theorist of relational spaces (e.g. Mezzadra and Neilson 2012; Hanquinet et al. 2012). Yet in this context his thinking has received surprisingly little attention even though Bourdieu himself describes field theory broadly as a relational exploration into "social topology" (Bourdieu 1985: 723).

In engaging with Bourdieu's field theory we seek to utilize its potential in making sense of how transnational fields are at once relationally constituted (topological) and locally conditional (topographical). Rather than assuming an ontological priority of one over the other spatiality, we approach transnational practices as variously exposed to contextual influences and seek to account for this dynamism by distinguishing between a field's heteronomy (exposure) and autonomy (immunity) (Häkli and Kallio 2014). To this end it is necessary to discuss briefly the elements of Bourdieu's thought that pertain specifically to the autonomous and heteronomous character of transnational fields.

The key social dynamism that field theory foregrounds is competitive struggle between actors and groups that they engage in under the constitutive structure of the field, i.e. its rules (*nomos*). These are shaped historically and positionally so that the rules reflect the interests of dominant actors and groups in possession of the largest amount of legitimate forms of capital in the field. Competition and struggle over rules is formative of a field, just as is the coherence provided by the participating actors' needs to comply with its rules (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Hence, in a Bourdieuan understanding transnational fields emerge through a dynamism that draws actors and groups into competition and collaboration under and over 'rules' that structure inclusions, exclusions and awards in the fields. Individual actors may attempt to change these rules, to make them better serve their specific ends, but cannot do this under circumstances of their own choosing as long as they wish to take part in the fields' inherently hierarchical and competitive practices (Bourdieu 1993).

As topologically constituted social spaces fields are uneven and internally differentiated along a continuum where *autonomy* and *heteronomy* are the extreme ends. A field's autonomy represents the degree to which the rules regulating the field are specific to that particular field, and thus, relatively immune to influences other than those transpiring within the field's specific dynamism. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 178) use the mathematical field as an example of a high level of autonomy: "a top mathematician who wants to triumph over his opponents is compelled by the force of the field to produce *mathematics* to do so" (emphasis added). This triumph would not be achievable by means of external resources, such as economic or political capital. In the autonomy of the mathematical field scholars pursue research and are judged by their peers according to the inclusive standards of

mathematics as a science. In so doing they are drawn together into a relational field by compliance with and struggle over its rules and rewards, thus forming the topological space of 'global mathematics'.

Heteronomy, again, represents the degree to which external forces may intervene in actions and events within a field. As no field is entirely autonomous, heteronomous elements can be found in all fields, but to varying degrees (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). For instance, to the extent to which mathematics scholars operate in the context of their respective 'national' science and higher education policies, they find themselves enmeshed in the heteronomous end of the scientific field that is less immune to economic, bureaucratic and political influence. If the actors wish to succeed in a struggle for, say, more teaching hours for mathematics in secondary schools, they would have to bring in resources other than mere excellence in mathematics.

For our attempt to understand how the field of children's rights sets at once 'global' *and* 'local' conditions for practices of transnational citizenship, the differentiation between field autonomy and heteronomy is particularly consequential. A field's autonomy defines its particular economies of exchange and reward that draw practitioners together into a *topological* social space defined by the field's struggles and rules, rather than the boundaries of a nation-state society or any other territorial polity (see also Jones 2009). The heteronomous pole of the field, again, is more susceptible to influences from resources acquired in other fields (e.g. bureaucracy, politics, or economics). In this regard field heteronomy is a manifestation of the continuing significance of 'local' *topographic* contextualities, such as the institutional realm within a nation-state.

In the next section we set out to trace the intermingling of topographically and topologically conditioned practices by distinguishing between heteronomy and autonomy in the handling of the Finnish country report on children's rights in the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the mobilization of the CRC's recommendations by Finnish children's rights organizations and activists. We seek to show that what seems like an interaction between two separate realms, one global and the other local, is actually part of transnational citizenship practiced within the field of children's rights.

The Fourth Periodic Report of Finland to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Country reporting as a basic operation of the UNCRC

The field of children's rights is currently well institutionalized, and this legal and material stability in its part helps reproduce the autonomy of the field. The implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted by the General Assembly in 1989, and the related Optional Protocols is monitored by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that convenes regularly in Geneva. The State parties are obliged to submit periodic reports to the CRC concerning the measures by which the admitted rights of the child have been implemented and the CRC's previous recommendations responded to. The periodic reports are submitted every five years and the CRC seeks to consider them within the next two years, meeting also representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations during the process. After that the CRC provides its conclusions and recommendations to the State that is again expected to meet them within the next five years.

The following analysis concerns the processing and uses of the Fourth Periodic Report of the Government of Finland, submitted in 2008 and responded to in 2011. The original report covers the period from July 2003 to July 2008, and was supplemented by three NGO reports and two reports by the Ombudsman for Children in Finland in 2010–2011. In addition to these, our data contains the statements by the Ombudsman and the Finnish NGO Delegation at the pre-sessional working group of the 57th session of the CRC (7–8 February 2011, Geneva), a summary of the Finnish delegation's talk in the following constructive dialogue (9 June 2011), and the CRC's concluding observations and recommendations (17 June 2011). Together these materials illuminate citizenship practices embedded in the formal monitoring process.

To analyze field autonomy we have also examined case-specific materials, such as the Innocenti Declaration, the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding and related UNICEF and WHO programs, and documents and statistics on the Finnish public child welfare system. Moreover, to gain access to the various domestic uses of the CRC's recommendations, we have looked into the post-2011 activities of the Children's Ombudsman and some local NGOs. The material we analyze includes appeals to the Finnish

government, action strategies and annual reports, website, blog and column texts, leaflets and handouts, and other documents that explicitly make reference to the monitoring process or the recommendations, using these to promote issues that they find topical and important. We supplement the analysis with some informal reflections by Maria-Kaisa Aula, the then Ombudsman for Children in Finland, and a former member of the CRC, Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tähtelä.

By analyzing these materials we seek to understand different logics that have an influence on transnational citizenship in the field of children's rights. More particularly, in this paper we set out to trace "field effects" (Bigo 2008; Dezalay and Garth 2006) based on the field's capacity to impose values that are relatively immune to criticism (field autonomy), and how these grow weaker when brought to bear on practices and issues placed at the fringes of the field more open to contextual influences (field heteronomy). We seek to show that, more or less immune to contextuality, these acts of transnational citizenship evolve in variable ways.

General Character of the Finnish Periodic Report

The Fourth Periodic Report of the Government of Finland on the implementation of the UNCRC, drafted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Legal Service Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions, begins by stating that the national legislation is consistent with its principles. Finland has been a party to the UNCRC since 1991 and adopted also the Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

The report states that after the previous reporting in 2004 the national legislation has undergone some fundamental changes in appreciation of the spirit of the UNCRC. For instance the Penal Code was supplemented in 2004–2006 to criminalize trafficking in human beings and child abduction, the position of the Ombudsman for Children was instituted in 2004 by a specific Act, the Youth Act was renewed in 2006 to support adolescents' active citizenship and their becoming part of the society, and the Child Welfare Act was thoroughly revised in 2007 with children's hearing and participation rights in mind. Finland had also made new international contractual obligations, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2006), and the UN

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on Individual Complaints (2007) (Fourth Periodic Report 2008).

Further expressing full compliance with the UNCRC, the report lists extensively the general measures with which Finland has sought to respond to the CRC's previous recommendations. These include the provision of equal access to services for all children (regional equality), comprehensive collection of data on children to allow detailed analysis of their living conditions and the implementation of their rights, the dissemination of the UNCRC among children and youth (particularly vulnerable groups), and systematic training of professionals in children's rights. These are followed by responses regarding the definition of the child and other general children's rights principles. Prohibition of discrimination is discussed in detail, as well as the principle of the best interests of the child and the right to life, survival and development (Fourth Periodic Report 2008).

In all, the Finnish Periodic Report seems detailed, comprehensive and highly attentive to all kinds of issues that pertain to children's rights in the country. The CRC processed the Finnish report in a procedure that consisted of a pre-sessional working group in Geneva in February 2011, followed by the Committee's thorough scrutiny of the report and its supplements, and ending with a constructive dialogue between the Committee and the Finnish representatives in a second meeting in June 2011. Finally, based on the report and these discussions the Committee made its concluding observations on the report and gave their recommendations to the Finnish government at the end of June 2011.

Transnational citizenship in the uses of Finland's country report

Field autonomy in action: breastfeeding as a global norm

The CRC's concluding observations and recommendations to Finland follow a format that the Committee has developed over years in responding to the country reports. A brief note is provided acknowledging the follow-up measures and the progress achieved in Finland, but most space is reserved to areas of concern and related extensive notes. These are divided into six substantial sections followed by another three points concerning the furthering of human rights more generally (Concluding Observations 2011).

Most of the CRC's recommendations are unsurprising, such as the point the Committee raises on the rights of ethnic minorities, immigrant and asylum-seeking children, hearing the views of the child, and deinstitutionalization in health issues. However, there is a recommendation that stands out as a peculiarity when seen against the socio-cultural context to which it is offered. In its comments 45 and 46 of the Concluding Observations to Finland, the CRC first notes positively that the State has recently adopted the Finnish National Program of Action for Breastfeeding Promotion and that the Follow up Group for Breastfeeding promotion is monitoring it. However, the Committee then conveys concern over the "rates of breastfeeding" and "mother's access to breastfeeding information", as well as "lack of awareness and education on the importance of breastfeeding" in Finland. It therefore recommends that "the State party strengthen its efforts to promote breastfeeding" by providing access to materials, and raising public awareness of its benefits and of the risks of artificial feeding (Concluding Observations 2011: 11).

Fostering children's well-being through healthy nutrition is an obvious goal in itself, but to give breastfeeding such a prominent role in recommendations to a country where malnutrition is rare and infant mortality among the lowest in the world seems oddly out of context. Adding to this, the Finnish Periodic Report states that "Finnish mothers breastfeed their infants for a longer period than before, up until the age of seven months on average, in addition to other forms of nutrition" (Fourth Periodic Report 2008: 62). This indicates that artificial feeding is not among the most serious concerns when thinking of the nutritional well-being of Finnish children. Moreover, the world-renowned system of public child welfare clinics in Finland actively advises mothers to broaden their children's nutritional sources beginning from the age of six months if not sooner (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2014). Partial breastfeeding is therefore a customary practice in Finland where both parents are typically involved in caring for the child from early on and external child care is very common (Uusitalo et al. 2012).

What first seems surprising in CRC's recommendations to Finland turns somewhat less striking when set against the fact that the Committee basically recommends breastfeeding to all of its State parties. This reveals that breastfeeding enjoys a firm position as part of the recognized rights of the child, to the extent that it informs practices of transnational citizenship almost independently of the context in which these rights are viewed and

promoted. In more analytical terms we suggest that to fully grasp the CRC's actions in this regard, the practice should be seen as part of the *autonomy* of the field of children's rights rendering it relatively immune to contextuality.

As an issue related to children's rights, breastfeeding started gaining prominence in parallel with the drafting of the UNCRC from the late 1970s. It has been promoted particularly by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the specialized agency World Health Organization (WHO), in various programs and declarations over the 1980s. Their standing in breastfeeding was crystallized in the Innocenti Declaration (1990) set out for the "Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding", and confirmed in the "Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding" that was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2002. Despite its general title, the Strategy is heavily focused on breastfeeding issues: "Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants. [...] The vast majority of mothers can and should breastfeed, just as the vast majority of infants can and should be breastfed" (Global Strategy 2003: 7–10).

The consensus on the insurmountable benefits of breastfeeding is also adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), not least because the UNCRC explicitly mentions "the advantages of breastfeeding" (§24/2e). Driven by several international policy and expert organizations as well as the CRC, the issue has gained veritable immunity to questioning. In its monitoring work the Committee has canonized breastfeeding as one of the core rights of the child, and consequently regularly brings up breastfeeding as a specific concern in its responses to country reports.

The states reminded on the matter cover all continents, variable socio-economic and health conditions, and health care systems. Without exception, the CRC recommends breastfeeding as defined in the Innocenti Declaration (1990): "All infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk from birth to 4-6 months of age. Thereafter, children should continue to be breastfed, while receiving appropriate and adequate complementary foods, for up to two years of age or beyond". These figures have come to stand for the categorical minimum in meeting children's rights, with anything less giving reason to concern, regardless of context.

The issue of breastfeeding shows well how field autonomy operates in conditioning practices of transnational citizenship. Once established as an unquestionable policy line in compliance with the rules and dominant practices of the field of children's rights, the promotion of breastfeeding is recommended by the Committee to each country independently of how pressing the issue is locally. This influence is a transnational 'field effect' with specific consequences that we have addressed above. Importantly, it is also a constitutive force that, for its part, holds together the topological field of children's rights where transnational citizenship is practiced in the form of advocacy. The breastfeeding policy line is upheld at the heart of children's rights agenda by some devoted child rights advocates whose agency is essential in this development (on the establishment of the field, see Häkli and Kallio 2014).

Field autonomy helps in accounting for actions of the CRC that may be difficult to understand otherwise. Yet practices of children's rights advocacy look very different when viewed at the fringes of the transnational field that is more subject to contextual influences. It is to these practices, conditioned by field heteronomy, that we turn to next.

Domesticating the transnational: children's rights and the Finnish alcohol policy

The Concluding Observations (2011) of the CRC is a publicly available document that has been translated to both Finnish and Swedish and can be accessed via various channels by all those who are interested in its recommendations. In settings less dominated by what is considered pertinent in the field autonomy, the uses of the CRC's recommendations are often made to resonate with issues that are surprisingly far removed from those addressed by the CRC in the first place.

The debate on Finnish alcohol policy is a case in point. The Finnish Alcohol Act and the Temperance Work Act are currently under reform with the aim of further preventing alcohol related problems in public health and safety. At the outset it should be noted that even though children and youth are recognized as particular groups affected by the use of alcohol in Finland, children's rights *per se* do not have a notable role in the policy debate. Hence the memos published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health do not mention children's rights in any form, even though many concerns related to children and youth are brought

up. Similarly, the wide-ranging report on alcohol consumption, risks and policies commissioned by the government makes no mention of the issue (Karlsson et. al 2013).

However, the Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention (EHYT), an association comprising of 32 NGOs and private organizations, has found children's rights an appealing entry point to debates on the Finnish alcohol policy. Some of its member organizations are strongly dedicated to child welfare issues, some to abuse-related sicknesses, some specifically to drugs and alcohol, and the rest to health issues in general, involving plenty of specialized civic actors and activists. With this expertise, EHYT is generally well informed about both alcohol and child policy issues and thus capable of bringing up children's rights in the context of the alcohol policy reform.

In commenting on the starting points and framework of the legislative reform, the Association states that "According to the §3/1 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, effective as law in Finland, the best of the child must be considered in all legislative and administrative activities that concern children". The statement then takes up the CRC's recommendations to Finland and notes that according to them "Finland should intensify its activities to decrease children and young people's alcohol usage by educating them about the harmful effects of alcohol [... and] to ensure that the principle of the best of the child is adequately considered in all legislative, administrative and legal proceedings" (EHYT 2012: 2). These claims, based on the UNCRC, are made explicitly to advance children's well-being.

Yet, as is typical in heteronomous settings, children's rights advocacy as practiced by EHYT is not merely about children but serves as an overall framework to specific issues, many of which have little to do with children's rights as such. For example, in its commentary the Association asserts that alcohol taxation should be raised, marketing ought to be banned for other than low- and non-alcoholic beverages, the retail sale of alcohol should not be liberated and state monopoly in retail of strong alcohol beverages should be maintained, the alcohol content of mild beverages should be cut to 3.5 per cent, and health warnings ought to be used more in alcohol packaging (EHYT 2012: 2–6). While these measures may indirectly touch upon many children's lives, their purpose and effects are aiming at maximizing the Association's influence on general substance abuse prevention.

This example of field heteronomy shows how the scope of children's rights may extend as they are taken up in variable contexts to forward different kinds of interests and goals. While the issues discussed above are all very much contextual and have their roots in the long term development of alcohol policy in Finland, and even though EHYT is a fully domestic organization without any international functions or activities in foreign languages, it is nevertheless clear that the Association is partaking in children's rights advocacy as a transnational practice. Its argumentation leans heavily on the UNCRC and the recommendations of the CRC, and it expresses deep concern with the realization of children's rights in its public announcements. Yet what characterizes its agency is embeddedness in the national contexts that condition the forms and means of its actions.

The practices of citizenship by EHYT operate under field heteronomy that allows considerable leeway as to how and for what purposes it may mobilize the transnational field of children's rights. The extent to which its arguments are acknowledged by the players involved in the legislative reform will eventually determine the weight of the field of children's rights in Finnish alcohol policy. For the present, children's rights have not been brought up in parliamentary discussions on the reform but the Governmental Bill on substance abuse prevention (HE 339/2014) mentions the UNCRC explicitly. This suggests that EHYT has had some success in its advocacy and that its actions resonate at once both nationally and globally.

Fluctuating transnational citizenship: the ambiguous role of key actors

Above we have analyzed practices of transnational citizenship through two cases that show how differently the field of children's rights may condition actions depending on whether these unfold within field autonomy or heteronomy. Breastfeeding as a universal right of the child recommended to Finland, and children's rights taken up as part of domestic debate on alcohol policy reform represent two extremes in what actually is a continuum from autonomy to heteronomy within the transnational field of children's rights. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) point out, all fields have both self-regulative and open-ended elements which makes them at once topologically constituted and topographically conditional.

From this it follows that actors recognized as competent players within a field will always have to negotiate their roles according to the particular situation at hand. Hence, in the case of breastfeeding a children's rights professional is expected to command the health policy terrain that in return justifies its promotion as a universal goal. In the current field of children's rights this position is very immune to critical questioning, which gives both the issue and its protagonists 'global' purchase. Again, the debate on the Finnish alcohol policy reform presents actors with a much more volatile situation where command of children's rights issues may or may not be an asset. The latter depends not only on the import of children's rights as such, but also on how well the actors are able to domesticate key issues defined within the field, i.e. how much their arguments have purchase in the heteronomous debate.

Moreover, as the transnational field of children's rights is a unified even if porous and uneven socio-spatial configuration, actors may move between roles that are variously influenced by its autonomy or heteronomy. The Ombudsman for Children in Finland is a prime example of such in-betweenness dynamism. The Finnish Government established the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in September 2005 and nominated Maria Kaisa Aula, an experienced politician with a background in academia, the first office holder. The Ombudsman is strongly mandated to promote children's rights and act as their voice in all matters, but it is also a state authority, funded by the government and obliged to report to it annually. On top of this, the Ombudsman is an independent representative of the state when the government interacts with international bodies, such as when reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This threefold position puts the Ombudsman into variable roles in the field of children's rights, ranging from a relatively sovereign actor with recognized competence in the autonomy of the field to one struggling with the challenge of promoting children's rights in situations defined by the conflicting interests of domestic politics and policy making. An example will help in illustrating the point.

The CRC is keen to hear independent advocacies, such as NGOs and the Ombudsman, because they provide much-needed additional information to its monitoring process. In the words of a former Committee member Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tähtelä: "The States embellish their reports, but the organizations tell the truth" (Komi 2009: 6). Hence, when processing the Finnish Periodic Report, the CRC heard the Ombudsman Maria Kaisa Aula who used the

occasion first and foremost to appeal to the Committee *on behalf of Finnish children and youth*, asking the Committee's support in promoting their rights. She ended her address with a list of ten issues where recommendations from the CRC would be highly useful in advancing children's rights in Finland. Portraying these as "further ideas for areas of discussion with our government next June", she situated herself firmly into the autonomy of the field of children's rights as distinguished from her position as an office holder responsible to the Finnish Government. In the former role she is an independent advocate of children's rights, just as is the CRC, whereas in the latter role her work is subject to governmental statutes and criss-crossing domestic interests. To underline her position as part of the field autonomy, Aula summarizes her point for the CRC as follows: "So all in all what should we urge the government to do: Let us not leave children and young people alone in any way" (Ombudsman 2011).

Empowerment by field autonomy does not follow the Ombudsman when she finds herself negotiating children's rights issues in more heteronomous environments. Take for instance the practical implementation of children's rights to be heard, one of the ten issues Aula asked the CRC to heed in its recommendations to Finland. It is a policy goal that is difficult to advance systematically because of radically differing views on whether right to be heard also entails decision making that respects children's opinions or will, or makes children responsible for decisions in matters where they have been heard. In this regard to hear children when planning new playgrounds is much less controversial than to hear a child in a custody trial, or in a decision about medical treatment. Yet, in her role as an *authority*, the Ombudsman is mandated to advance children's right to be heard in and through these and many other domestic policies.

As a particularly pliant advocate of children's rights, the Ombudsman is at once a 'locally' and 'globally' significant player, albeit with very different resources and stakes depending on the context. We argue that the figure of the Children's Ombudsman as a governmental authority on one hand, and a children's rights advocate on the other, is emblematic of how practices of transnational citizenship unfold also more generally.

The complex terrain of transnational citizenship

In November 28th 2014, the first citizens' initiative was passed forward in the Finnish Parliament. It concerned Equal Marriage Law that would provide same-sex partners the right to marry. Currently same-sex couples can formalize their relationship by entering into a civil partnership, which involves a legal position similar to married couples with three notable exceptions: the use of the family name of the spouse, the right of a spouse to adoption, and the establishment of paternity. These can be attained only through marriage. The citizens' initiative met with contradictory treatment in the Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee where it was rejected first in June by vote of 10 to 6 and then in November (9 to 8). A week after the latter decision, however, the proposition received a narrow victory in the actual Parliamentary vote (105 to 92). Between these two votes, the Parliament held a general discussion based on the Legal Affairs Committee report. In this discussion Members of the Parliament referenced children's rights 25 times. Claims based on the UNCRC were made both for and against the law and in connection with a number of issues. Yet it was clear that at stake in the debate was the question whether children can have same-sex parents and same-sex parents may have children.

This process exemplifies well the mobilization of different kinds of citizenships. The process began from the *Tahdon2013* (I Do2013) citizens' initiative campaign launched on March 19th 2013 by *Tasa-arvoinen Suomi ry* (an association established for this cause), and gathered momentum with the signatures of 166 851 individual citizens during the next six months. It then moved to the Parliament where the initiators introduced the proposal to the MPs, from there to the Legal Affairs Committee where it was thoroughly debated, and finally to the Parliament that first discussed it and then accepted it. The national media was active in the process throughout, along with the Finnish people who participated in the debate enthusiastically in both public and private discussions. While much of the process could be framed in exclusively domestic terms we argue that these practices of citizenship were transnational in manifold ways.

The question of same-sex marriage is obviously embedded in the field of gay rights, another subfield of human rights that has a long transnational history and dynamics of its own. But the parliamentary discussion shows that children's rights also played a significant part in the struggle. In many occasions, the MPs and the general public turned the quest for adult citizens' equality into a question of children's rights. The UNCRC was used overtly to back up

liberal and conservative moral claims alike, in some cases more skillfully than in others. The very mixed nature of the debate reveals that the struggle involved activists, politicians, researchers, and individual persons well informed of gay rights and children's rights issues, but also many people who hardly had any grasp of these fields. The events hence took place concurrently within field autonomy and heteronomy as qualitatively different settings for transnational practices of citizenship.

What we have argued in this paper, and what this case also testifies to, is that transnational practices of citizenship have such complexity that they require in-depth theoretical engagement. In the existing field theoretical literature on transnationalization the aspect of fields' internal structuration has largely gone unnoticed, but we argue that it carries a strong potential for unraveling the relationship between 'local' and 'global' forces in transnational fields. We suggest that national societies as enduring frames for politics and policy making are influential in struggles that unfold in the 'local' heteronomous end of the field of children's rights, whereas in the autonomous pole issues gain a more translocal and thus 'global' character. This is how the field of children's rights is at once 'local' and 'global', and each act or event is potentially effected by and influential in both, albeit according to differing logics of practice.

In our analysis of children's rights advocacy, we have sought to better understand these practices by means of field theory and particularly its conceptual tools that help explicate transnational space as an uneven, shifting and contested process. We believe that this theoretical approach has much to offer to the interdisciplinary study of transnational processes as it helps overcome the national-global dichotomy and apprehend spatial relations as both topological and topographical. We propose the analysis presented in this paper as a tentative assessment and hope that it will encourage scholars to further scrutinize the social dynamics of transnationalization.

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